Rich pictures in qualitative research in higher education: The student as consumer and producer in personal branding

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Marketing principles and consumerism are evident in higher education with universities central to the development of fit for purpose graduates. Students are increasingly viewed as consumers of university products and expected to manage self-hood and to promote themselves to the marketplace. This article is drawn from research in an ongoing larger scale project exploring the ownership of students in shaping their 'career capital' and in building 'brand-me' from a student perspective when seeking industrial placement and graduate career progression. It appraises the use of a 'soft systems' methodology using rich pictures (RP) to support qualitative one-to-one interviews with students in higher education. The findings showed that the combination of in-depth interviews with the rich pictures creative qualitative approach provided a much closer generation of insights to inform staff in the support of students pursuing of industrial placement and career progression, and for the students it offered an opportunity for self-reflection and consideration of 'brand-me'.

Keywords: Brand-me, rich picture, personal branding, career capital

Increasingly employability is used as a metric in the United Kingdom to evaluate university performance. The context of this research paper relates to the field of student placement in higher education in United Kingdom. It explores the concept of personal branding with students and their promotion of self in their transition from student to employee as part of their career trajectory. These periods of transition may include the preparation and time spent as part of work-integrated learning (WIL) or industrial placement, and in preparing for work as graduates. The following section highlights the marketisation of higher education and the resultant pressures facing students in personal branding.

MARKETIZATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION – STUDENTS AS CONSUMERS AND PRODUCERS

In response to the employability agenda in the UK (Higher Education Funding Council for England, 2011), the focus of employability policy from government and university regulators is predominantly based on neoliberal marketisation principles. In addition, the change in funding base of undergraduate level higher education in England is seen as commodification of higher education (Morrison, 2017). This has shaped the change for universities and higher education central to the development of 'fit-for-purpose' graduates for the knowledge economy and economic prosperity as a whole (Olssen & Peters, 2005) and the perspective of students seeing themselves as consumers of the higher education product (Brooks, 2017). We are thus at a point where universities (as producers) are having to compete in the market for institutional survival in promoting their courses and students (as consumers) are invited to select the 'product' best suited to their needs (Gewirtz, 1996, p. 289). However, students are also producers having to promote themselves to the employers in the marketplace when applying and competing for positions for placement, work-integrated learning and employment. We can apply the concepts of marketing to individuals where a product has both intangible and tangible attributes (Brassington & Pettit, 2013). These attributes combine to create a bundle of benefits with both functional and emotional values, or the brand promise (de Chernatony, McDonald, & Wallace, 2013, p. 31) which encompass expectations and perceptions from other people and shapes the personal brand equity in

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the development of 'brand-me'. Everything a person does, how they speak, how they appear and behave, and the contacts they make, sends signals which come together to create an image and shape a personal brand. Bourdieu's Theory of Practice (Bourdieu, 1977, 1986) relating to field and habitus may be used as a lens in this context. The perceptual nature of a personal brand provides evidence of complying, or not, with the accepted measures of capital to match the rules of the game. These rules determine the amount, type and level of resources or capital the students need to have in order to participate and succeed in the game of securing a placement or position of employment upon graduation. A key branding precept is that a brand should be simple, clear and consistent. The 'nonymous' online digital age and media environment (such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and other digital social media tools) acts to scaffold engagement between parties, identity construction and social biographies (Zhao, Grasmuck, & Martin, 2008; Manago & Vaughn, 2015). The anchorage and authenticity of an online projection depends on the overlap between the online and offline media in being representative of the person, their habitus and disposition. The avid use of social media by young students display what Goffman (1959) described as interaction coherency whereby the actors (students) foster impressions that reflect well upon themselves and encourage others, by various means, to accept their preferred definition, in effect a 'front'. Social media could be used as a tool to promote brand-me or display valued forms of capital to stand out when applying for a job or placement position. Social networking profiles that show a professional image can boost a candidate's chance for a job (Harris & Rae, 2011 p. 16) whilst keeping it authentic, honest and to present who they really are, in essence to 'Be-You'. Moore and Lee (2017) proposed that individuals with a strong self-verification focus communicated this in a more fluid way and are perceived as more authentic by employers. For higher education tutors managing periods of WIL or industrial placement, this presents a challenge in how to best support students in the transformation from student to periods of placement employment and subsequent career progression where students are required to have an understanding of the entry conditions of the market place, or rules of the game (Bourdieu, 1977), and so that they may both '*stand out and fit in*' (Parmentier, Fischer, & Reuber, 2013). In doing so, the development of brand-me and an awareness of the valued forms of capital should be a consideration in support of the transition from student through placement to graduate and future career planning. With such a view, it became critical to explore the ownership of students in preparing for placement or employment using a method that could help unpack how students construct employability and shaping brand-me. In order to do this, a soft systems methodology using rich pictures was used where participants are asked to illustrate their thoughts through drawings to support the interview on one or two specific open-ended questions. This approach is explained below.

THE USE OF DRAWING AND RICH PICTURE WITH STUDENTS

The 'soft systems' methodology is a participatory approach to decision making, general management problem solving using 'soft' human interaction as part of the process looking at 'systems' and relationships in an organized way as devised by Peter Checkland (Checkland & Poulter, 2006; Bell & Morse, 2012; Betterevaluation, 2016). It uses the creation of drawings or pictures which can be used to gather ideas and can then be used further to examine influencing factors, identify causes and in developing ideas or strategies moving forward. Often this approach is used with a group of people to discuss and create the pictures. These pictures were called rich pictures as they communicated so much richness by their design and inference. Rich pictures is a soft systems methodology and used to capture the thinking process of individuals using icons, graphics, symbols, underlining, and directional arrows to visually communicate feelings and affect (Bell & Morse, 2010; Berg & Pooley, 2013). One of the key features of using rich pictures is that it is focused on the situation within which the intervention takes place (Betterevaluation, 2016) and the discussion that takes place.

The use of drawings in social sciences and as part of qualitative research and participatory visual research methodologies (PVRM) is not new, but there are differing approaches undertaken by researchers and a limited depth of literature on using this method either singularly or as a multi-modal method. The intervention work of PVRM has been used in education, the nursing sector and social work particularly with vulnerable subjects. For instance, drawing as a research tool using simple line drawings has been used in the nursing sector in understanding illness conditions to necessitate knowledge production and how people make sense of their world with a visual product as its outcome (Guillemin, 2004). It has been used with palliative healthcare professionals (Horne, Masley, & Allison-Love, 2017) from one hospice in West Yorkshire, England to explore the process of drawing and how it would help facilitate the communication and understanding of how healthcare staff emotionally resource their roles within a hospice setting. The use of drawings as part of a qualitative research was undertaken by Zwiefel and Van Wezemael, (2012) as a subjective modelling method in a complex social planning situation related to municipal old age policy planning in Switzerland. Their approach was an actor-centered approach to allow the drawing to develop as the interview was conducted and as part of the discussion; the researcher even assisted with the actual drawing with some participants. The work of Theron, Mitchell, Smith, and Stuart (2011) captures many examples of where drawings as a research method have been used with children and adults mainly in African countries and often tackling complex topics such as human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and migrant journeys. Bowen (2016) used rich picture method with students in a group to investigate students' assumptions about how they learn to become professionals. The use of drawings was used in studying curriculum leadership by Wan (2018) with students individually in a phenomenographic study concerning their conceptions and learning experiences of curriculum leadership. Lee and Cavanaugh (2016) used an infographic resume project with their students on a sport marketing course to reinforce the concept of visual identity and branding and to stand out through a non-traditional medium. The use of drawings was used in education where the drawings provided valuable information for the teaching and learning process, and determining misconceptions as well as an open-ended means for creative expression (Nurbaety, Rustaman & Sanjaya, 2016; Kose, 2018).

Despite the different approaches taken in drawing, either by groups or individuals, using colors or lead pencils, as a mapping tool or in providing an integrated narrative account, the common benefits across each research case is that the discourse through the drawing, whilst attained in different ways, achieves the same beneficial outcome of providing an insightful two dimensional perspective and collaborative approach. The drawings trigger thoughts and questions or act as a catalyst in helping the participants articulate their thoughts, emotions and feelings which were implicit and hard to convey. The drawing produced, whether colorful or black and white, with images or written words, is more than a product on paper. It offers reflection, instigates discussion, develops thoughts, captures insights and make understanding more tangible.

How the drawings may be analyzed is of consideration. The extensive work of Sarah Pink (2012) and Gillian Rose (2016) on visual methodologies provide a good background into visual analysis of visual methods. However, their work in particular is connected to the use of advertisements, video and photographs and to a lesser extent drawings. This is true for the many qualitative research method texts, where the analysis of participant-produced drawings has little or no mention. Therefore, this research set out to appraise the use of a soft systems methodology using rich pictures and drawings as part of the individual in-depth qualitative interviews and an appropriate approach to their evaluation.

METHODOLOGY

This paper draws on research from an ongoing larger scale project using qualitative in-depth interviews as developed by Strauss and Corbin (1998) with the integration of rich picture method as part of the in-depth interview. The research was undertaken within the boundaries of industrial placement and career trajectory at Harper Adams University, United Kingdom, with students, staff and employers. This paper presents findings from an early phase of the research with the main objectives to:

- Explore the ownership of students in shaping their personal branding and building brand-me from a student perspective.
- Appraise the use of rich picture method with individuals as part of the qualitative depth interviews.

The student perspective and sample for the early phase of the research was taken from students in the agri-food related sector in their second year of studies (two students pre-placement) who were in the process of applying and securing positions, along with two students who are post-placement in their final year of studies (in total three females and one male were recruited). Incorporating the drawing of pictures with individuals as part of in-depth qualitative interviews was considered to fit with the interpretivist methodological approach. It was used to explore whether rich pictures can be an analysis tool which allows us to understand what an individual thinks about when preparing for placement /employment and in shaping brand-me. Full university ethical approval (reference number: ERP3136 as part of Professional Doctorate at Keele University, United Kingdom) was gained beforehand, and permission was attained from each student to use the narrative and images as part of the research.

Consideration was taken with regards to the demographic profile of the participants with the choice of drawing tools being both contextually and culturally congruent (Rose, 2016; Theron et al., 2011). During the in-depth interview two questions were asked that required a participatory visual research method through the medium of drawing. The first asked the students to share the steps taken in preparing for placement and career management, and the second question was asked at a later point in the in-depth interview which pertained to considering brand-me. The participant was provided with a large sheet of paper on which to visually explain their answer. Each participant was provided with a large selection of different types of colored pens with which they used to draw, visually display, annotate and capture their thoughts. Once the rich picture question and process was explained, and participants were reminded that the quality of the drawing was not important, the student was then left to undertake the drawing on a table away from the interviewer but in the same room. This allowed the student to focus and not feel self-conscious with the interviewer hovering over them and yet enabled the provision of reassurance and timely feedback (Oakden, 2015) and confidentiality. For each rich picture a structured specific prompt was provided which Theron et al., (2011, p. 24) suggests contributes to richer data generation. On completion of the drawing, the student indicated that they were finished, and the interview reconvened. The student was then asked to explain their thoughts to enable collaborative meaning-making (Guillemin, 2014) and on occasion further annotation was made. The pictures and notes made during the interview were used in conjunction with an audio recorder to capture the full transcript and each student was given alphanumeric coding (for example, S1) to protect their identity in the data. The interviews were transcribed under each research question heading and the content analyzed by highlighting substantive statements and those that were felt to add something into key substantive points and then putting them into categories as suggested by Gillham (2003, p. 65) or headings and enriched with direct quotations displaying the range and character of the responses with a constructivist approach.

The pictures drawn in this research are an important part of data collection. In the process of analyzing the audio transcripts the pictures drawn are inseparable from the narrative. The picture drawing is not a product, it needs clarification in order to acquire meaning. The drawing is a process of production and what can be learned from it and where it "opened up possible spaces of analysis that can be discussed during the interview and permits an analysis of not yet actualized processes or of elements that will remain virtual" (Zweifel & Van Wezemael, 2012). This presents a challenge in data processing as to how to go about analyzing the narrative and drawings. Ciuccarelli (2016, p. 14) suggest that a general visual literacy is needed: "any visualization is an interpretation and it is the designer's responsibility to be fully aware of the intentionality of any communication artefact". From the point of view of doing visual analysis, the way ideas, values and identities are communicated and what elements, processes and causalities are hidden need to be explored. In ascertaining the most appropriate approach in the analysis of the rich picture drawings it is apparent that there are several approaches that can be taken: as complementary to the narrative, as art form and as a social semiotic multimodal approach. Each approach is explained below and are used in the analysis of the data.

Narrative and Visual Analysis – Complementarity Approach

The main emphasis of the analysis was on the complementarity of the rich picture drawing with the interview as they give meaning and coded with the combination of both speech and drawing. This is similar to the approach used by Zweifel and Van Wezemael (2012) where the data collected was analyzed without a fuzzy double coding situation. In order to analyze the rich pictures, a framework of coding for both the verbal interview transcripts combined with the visual coding of the objects in the rich pictures (lines, graphics, arrows, icons) was developed. This is to extract and analyze the data and to provide a process that was iterative, inductive and interactional (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) and also fit with a Bourdieusian perspective encapsulating the reflexive element. The transcripts were read several times going through highlighted statements to derive categories for the responses to the question and to attempt to assign each substantive statement (where possible) to a category or sub code. These codes related to branding and marketing theories and steps students take to promote themselves.

Visual Analysis – As Art Form

Rich pictures can be considered as art, and when appraising pictures, it is a form of art criticism. This may be undertaken in many different forms. Criteria employed in the interpretation may encapsulate style, color, emotional expression with feelings from both a positivist and deductive framework and approach. Determining the most appropriate method of analyzing rich pictures from an art perspective is subjective and may use many different criteria. Bell and Morse (2012) used a series of steps as shown in Table 1 (devised by Carney, 1994 as cited in Bell& Morse, 2012) to apply to rich pictures to appraise both context and content when working with groups. This analytical framework was used in the study to appraise the usefulness of this method when using rich pictures with individuals.

In this research, using the framework in the Table 1 allowed for a much closer analysis than was initially evident from reading the transcripts. However, what it does not do is to facilitate a comparison between the respondents of common themes and for this reason the researcher argued that it should be supplemented by other forms of visual data analysis. This is explained in the next section using social semiotics and multimodal texts.

TABLE 1: The analytical framework for art as set out by Carney (1994) and how it could apply to rich pictures (Bell & Morse, 2012).

Step	Name of step	Notes	Rich Pictures
1	Locate the style	Note the art-historical context and its characteristic features upon which the content of the piece depends	The content of the Rich Picture; the problem or system being analyzed
2	Descriptive features and structures	Note the descriptive features and structures in the piece For example, the colors, shapes, arrangements, textures, brush strokes and thickness of lines	The content of the Rich Picture; the use of color, shapes, drawings etc.
3	Primary aesthetic features	Presence of any representational, expressive and exemplified features.	Are any features dominant in the picture? Perhaps because they are placed more centrally or drawn larger and in bolder lines.
4	Value features	These encompass aspects of both form and content. For example, the relationships of features in the picture.	Linkages between the elements of the rich picture; whether the components are isolated or grouped
5	Low-level Interpretation	The meaning or the content of the picture in its basic form	The overall content of the picture; is it narrow in focus or does it encompass many points?
6	High-level interpretation	Brings together the low-level interpretations along with such things as the artist's oeuvre, declarations made by the artist about the work and the art in an historical context.	Note the points made by the team when presenting the rich picture during a plenary. Are the points in the rich picture? How rich is the description given.
7	Critical judgement	Whether the picture has (or lacks) aesthetic value to a degree and whether the artwork has more (or less) value than another.	Some overall sense of the quality of the rich picture which emerges from all the above.

Visual Analysis - Social Semiotics and Multimodal Texts

When undertaking visual analysis and visual communication, we can consider a social semiotic approach to understand what choices are made in the design and what they are able to communicate. Ferdinand Saussure (1857-1913) was one of the founders of Semiotics, the science of the life of signs in society. Semiotics is the science of signs (Silverman, 2014) and a fusion of form and word, the signifier, and a concept, the signified. Semiotics, or sign-systems are mentioned in qualitative research texts but mainly in context of visual images from film, photography and with references to the work of the French writer Roland Barthes who followed Saussure as a reader of myths looking at layers of meaning and a system of connotation in pictures and later replaced as a play of signifiers. The work by Gunther Kress has foregrounded much of the understanding of semiotics and he notes that:

> Language alone can no longer give us full access to the meanings of most contemporary messages, which are constituted in several modes: on pages in the mode of *writing* and of *image,* on screens through CD-ROMS and on the Web; in *speech, music, image-* moving or still; in *gesture, colour and soundtrack.* In these forms of **texts** each mode, language included, is a partial bearer of meaning only (as cited in Somekh & Lewin, 2005, p.172 original emphasis).

The co-presence of modes may be replicating or echoing the language; or they may have different cultural meanings and affordances. A meaning of a sign is never fixed (Silverman, 2014). The perspective of understanding the meaning, with that of social semiotics, and the specific parts to play in the making of meaning, is the perspective of multimodality. The data from the in-depth qualitative interviews in this research along with the use of drawings provides multimodality and opens up scope for studying signs as part of the data gathering and meaning making. Social semiotics is a form of analysis that emphasizes the idea of choices that come with associations built up over time. The analysis it carries out involves identifying the affordances of different semiotic materials and making inventories of the semiotic resources that lie in their design and what are the kinds of social meanings. It may also need to be examined for not only what is being said and their complexities, but also for their silences (Rose, 2016).

Writing and visual communication are interrelated and what can be called 'integrated design' where linkages, causalities are communicated by symbolism. This may be in the form of arrows connecting boxes and the use of acronyms. The reading order could be from any direction: "A running text has a clear sense of running order, cohesion and conjunction. Here, in visual communication, the overall coherence comes from a visual design where different semiotic materials are deployed such as alignment, spacing, color coordination, iconographic representations and graphic shapes" (Ledin & Machin, 2018, p. 30). New writing is often seen in contemporary documents using bulleted lists, flow charts, images and graphics that in the past would have been mainly in written text. Hence the integration of text, images and graphic elements has led to a shift in how basic things like causalities and categorizations are communicated. Therefore, a rich picture does not need to be classified as having only pictures or images, it may be comprised of mostly writing. Semiology (or social semiotics) offers a full box of analysis tools with which to help with compositional interpretation or content analysis (Rose, 2016; Silverman, 2014).

The rich pictures for each student were very different in their layout (see Appendix A for some examples drawn by the students to depict brand-me and in preparing for placement as part of the in-depth interview). Some drawings showed interconnectivity with the use images, words and lines, while others used visual images but no connecting lines, and others were comprised of mainly writing.

However, many of these rich pictures showed causality with lines depicting the flow and different color fonts were used to give accent and affordance to the text or color used to underline the text. In essence all student respondents showed a visual coherence in their choice of semiotic materials, alignment, color coordination and showing an integrated design as proposed by Ledin and Machin (2018, p.30). Given the space constraint I will report on the data collected from four student participants while the data of other participants will serve as background understanding that is integral and crucial to the analysis. The findings presented here revolve around the dimensions of considering brand-me and the use of rich picture as a method and are representative across the entire data set.

MAIN FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The narrative and rich picture drawings for each student explaining the preparation for placement were able to elucidate a fascinating wealth of rich data to explore. The dimensions of brand-me and use of the rich picture method are considered here and some visual data shown.

Brand-Me

The questioning format in the in-depth interview deliberately avoided the specific use of the term 'brand-me' in the interview in order to tease out if this was a concept that they were aware of. Evidence of personal branding, making conscious decisions of self-promotion above that of devising a curriculum vitae had not become apparent as evidenced by their comments in the discussions. Therefore, in order to gain an understanding of the students' perception of the concept brand-me the students were asked the following question: "If you had to describe or consider yourself as a brand, or brand-me, what is it about you that would be part of your brand and how would you go about promoting brand-me, how would you display that?" A common theme across all students was the desire to reflect their personality. Student S1 had drawn a smiley face and a yellow sun explaining it as: "be portrayed as bright bubbly and happy…. Bring in happy rays" (S1). Student S3 created a logo with the letters AG surrounded by a square box with layers of colors describing it as: "so with the logo in the middle,…and kind of having it bright and colourful, because, I feel like I have a bright personality" (S3), see Figure 1. Student S4 linked personality with personal identity saying: "Friendly, adaptable, and African - they call me Saffa which is South Africa which would probably play a role in my identity" (S4).

How brand-me could be portrayed was more difficult for the students to explain. Student S1 said they would "try to be coherent and everything linked". However, the irony is that their rich picture was very eclectic. On the other hand, student S2 found it difficult to explain how to portray brand-me and paused several times in the verbal answer and yet this student S2, had a very clear rich picture, albeit in two halves and expressing the career capital values as being part of the product anatomy (see Figure 2) with several augmented features using the words, 'potential to be a very valuable employee' and 'honest, reliable, good people skills, leadership skills, intelligent, hardworking' showing tangible and intangible attributes (Brassington & Pettit, 2013, p. 206).

To be seen as hardworking, facing challenges and constantly developing was said to be important by students in considering brand-me. Student S2 used words in the rich pictures drawing to convey this along with the narrative, whilst student S3 used an image of a hammer and nail to connote the meaning of 'hard work', and student S4 had used the image of building bricks to convey hard work.
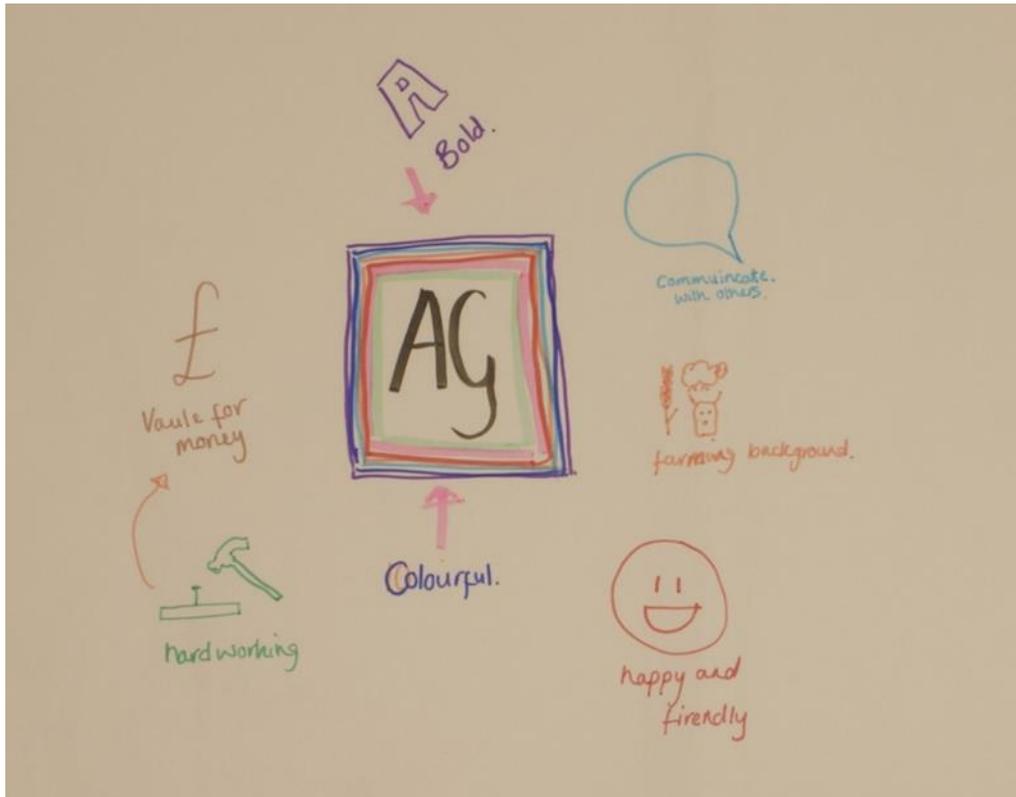
FIGURE 1: Rich picture drawing undertaken by student S3 to depict brand-me.

Clothing and appearance were mentioned by two of the students as being a way to portray brand-me which would also apply to Goffman's observation (1959) in how people enact to create conformity or impression. Student S3 had drawn a bright orange color dress on the pictures and saying: "I suppose in the way you dress maybe? like colorful, I suppose, yeah going back to my bought dresses for placement, I bought two black dresses for the two that I did not get, yet the red one, I did get so, like being colorful, bold in clothing, umm also having the right clothing…"(S3). The expression 'right clothing' was explored further with the student and explained as clothing suitable for the role and explained that having the suitable clothing for when on farm (practical, relatable to the farming community) or in the office (smart trousers or shirt for instance) meeting the needs of both business areas. Student S4 had drawn the purple tie to depict being well presented and said: "I don't know how to explain this. Your brand is your appearance really and if you come away well- presented everything else builds towards that mentality" (S4). This showed an understanding of how others may perceive you and whether you conform and fit-in with their expectations and values.

The questioning explored further whether in promoting yourself if there were any other particular factors in an attempt to tease out any further dimensions of habitus, background or augmented features that the students placed a value on promoting. Early in the in-depth interview student S4 had explained a series of struggles and rejections in securing a placement position and had put this down to being from a different culture in coming from Africa. The student had drawn several crosses in red adjacent to images of pink stick people, a telephone, the word poultry, and an image of a map of Africa
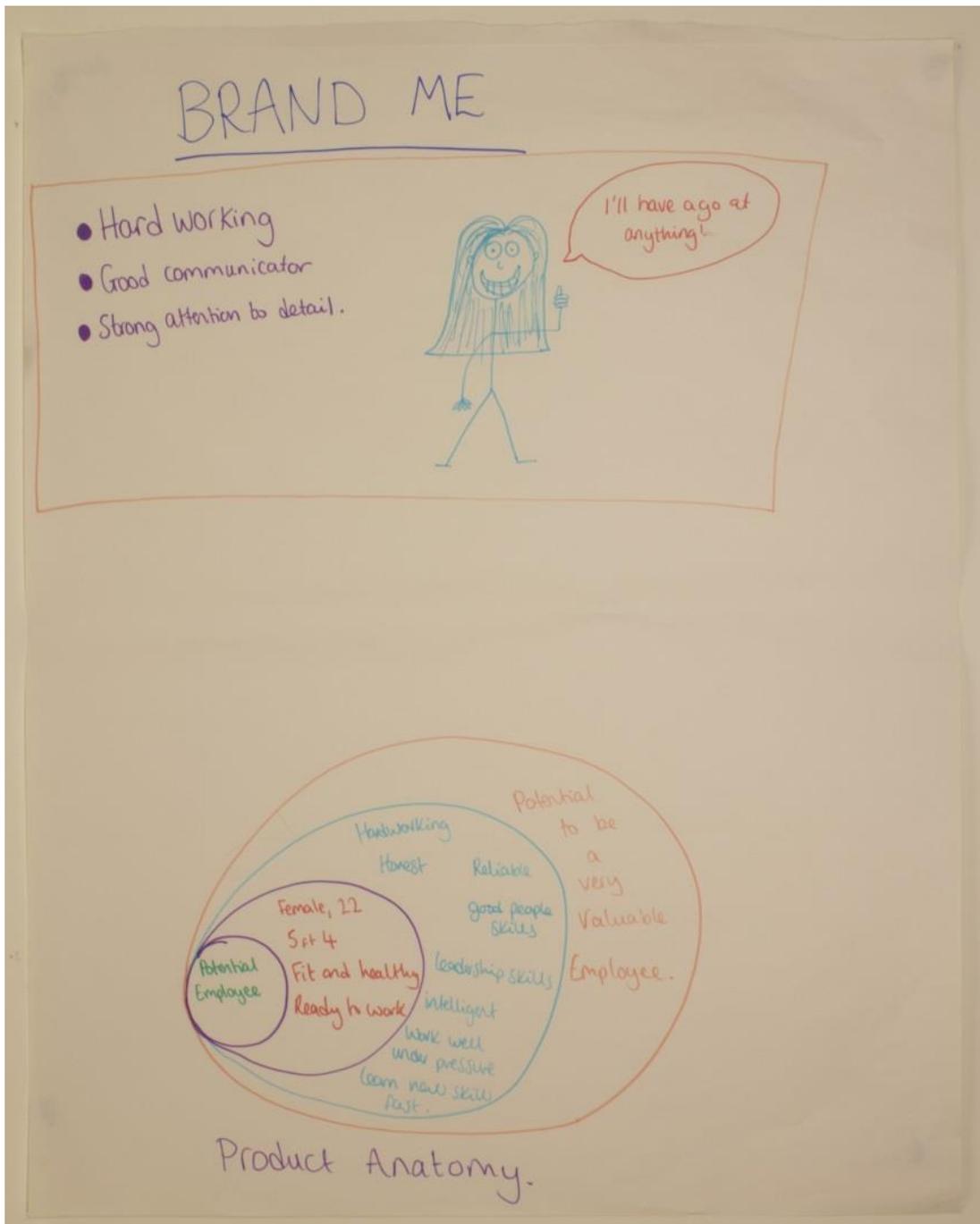
FIGURE 2: Rich picture drawing undertaken by student S2 to depict brand-me and shown as product anatomy.

in green, all to connote and to denote interview rejections and hearing about interview rejections by telephone from agri-food related companies explaining it as "I felt that maybe I wasn't prepared for the working world, but maybe it's that you don't fit with the stigma of the company that it is looking for" (S4). The aspect of being able to 'fit in' with the 'stigma' of the company appeared to be a matter of distress for the student. The concept of habitus enables links between individuals' inner worlds and external social and structural process. According to Reay (2015, p. 22) it "allows us to expand our understanding of how the past is played out in the present for individuals, but also to get a better grasp of the degree of ease and/or discomfort with which people respond to and internalize the wider social world, as they move across a range of familiar and unfamiliar fields". In the second rich picture drawing, student S4 had drawn an image of the world and the words 'embrace identity' and showed an understanding of how the past difficulties had played out in the present in saying:

> Coming away from placement and the last year at university has made me realize that basically you are who you are, and like, I'm from Africa, I live in England now. To be successful you have to just embrace who you are… to be successful you have to just embrace who you are and be able to run with it rather than fit into the mould. (S4).

From this we may take that the student was aware that it was important to be comfortable with 'self' and to be 'yourself', and in that way you will feel comfortable in the role being applied for and 'fit in' with the company. We may also take from this was in a sense, to be able to 'brand-me', you need to 'Be You' which suggests being more agential than 'fitting in' and part of brand equity.

Feedback on Using Rich Pictures

The feedback from students was favorable in undertaking the rich pictures and that it was interesting to do. The students found that relating it to brand-me was challenging but that it added a different dimension to the in-depth interview and was fun to do as articulated by student S3, "It was quite fun really, it's hard to think of what you could draw, but it's actually quite fun, it breaks it up a bit as well, yeah I quite liked that" (S3). Student S4 expanded further and said that undertaking the rich pictures was thought provoking and reflective, saying:

> It was really interesting, I like that it was thought provoking, because, basically you could have a questionnaire and you answer it basically without thinking, but whereas doing this you had to actually sit and think about yourself. It's almost easier to put it into words, but when you actually draw pictures to convey any ideas it's thought provoking and yeah, probably useful. (S4).

The drawings undertaken as part of the qualitative methodology appeared to provide pictures or semiotic materials containing a rich source of data when accompanied with explanation as part of the in-depth interview. The rich picture method was a fascinating dynamic character to the interview and led to genuine discovery for both myself and the student. Undertaking the drawing as part of the in-depth interview allowed students to express themselves in ways which are unusual. The rich pictures appeared to offer an expression of the inner life or 'soul' of the individual – whereby the students put great conscious effort into the pictures which highlighted the unconscious during the plenary session. Using rich pictures as an analysis tool was useful to understand what an individual thinks about when preparing for placement /employment and in shaping brand-me.

Some participants found undertaking the drawing task difficult to do and used mainly text on the paper. How 'rich' is a rich picture and does a text focused drawing offer less than one with many images on may be a concern for those using the method. However, the pictures are 'rich' in terms of

what they tell us about how the students approached the questions asked Bell and Morse (2012) suggest that even if the 'rich' pictures that result can be deemed to be 'poorer' than others, there can still be valuable learning in the process. It was evident from the student feedback that the analysis which emerges in a rich picture is not an end but a beginning, and that it provides the information for the next step in a process and thus, rich pictures do have transience.

The framework used by Bell and Morse (2012) as an exploratory means in appraising the rich pictures was useful to gain understanding The complementarity approach with the narrative analyzed in combination with the drawings, appraising the rich pictures initially as a whole as art form, and then further analyzing the visual in a social semiotic approach are interlinked in the analysis of the data. This combined approach allows the specific roles of the drawings and their multimodality along with the narrative, and the relation between them to be considered. This then provided the development of codes, concepts and themes for analysis and construction of theoretical framework.

CONCLUSION

This research set out to explore the ownership of students in shaping their personal branding and building brand-me from a student perspective. The methodology and methods used seemed appropriate for the research question. The early phase of the research provided an opportunity to appraise the use of rich picture drawings as part of the in-depth interviews with individuals and the most appropriate way to analyze the data using a complementary approach with the narrative and social semiotic analysis. The rich picture method provided a reflective tool for the students to consider their career journey and would be worthy of including in pedagogic preparations for employability Early findings show that there is merit in exploring further the affinity and tensions between the concept of personal brand equity and whether students see themselves as responsible, active agents in the market of employability as producers as well as consumers.

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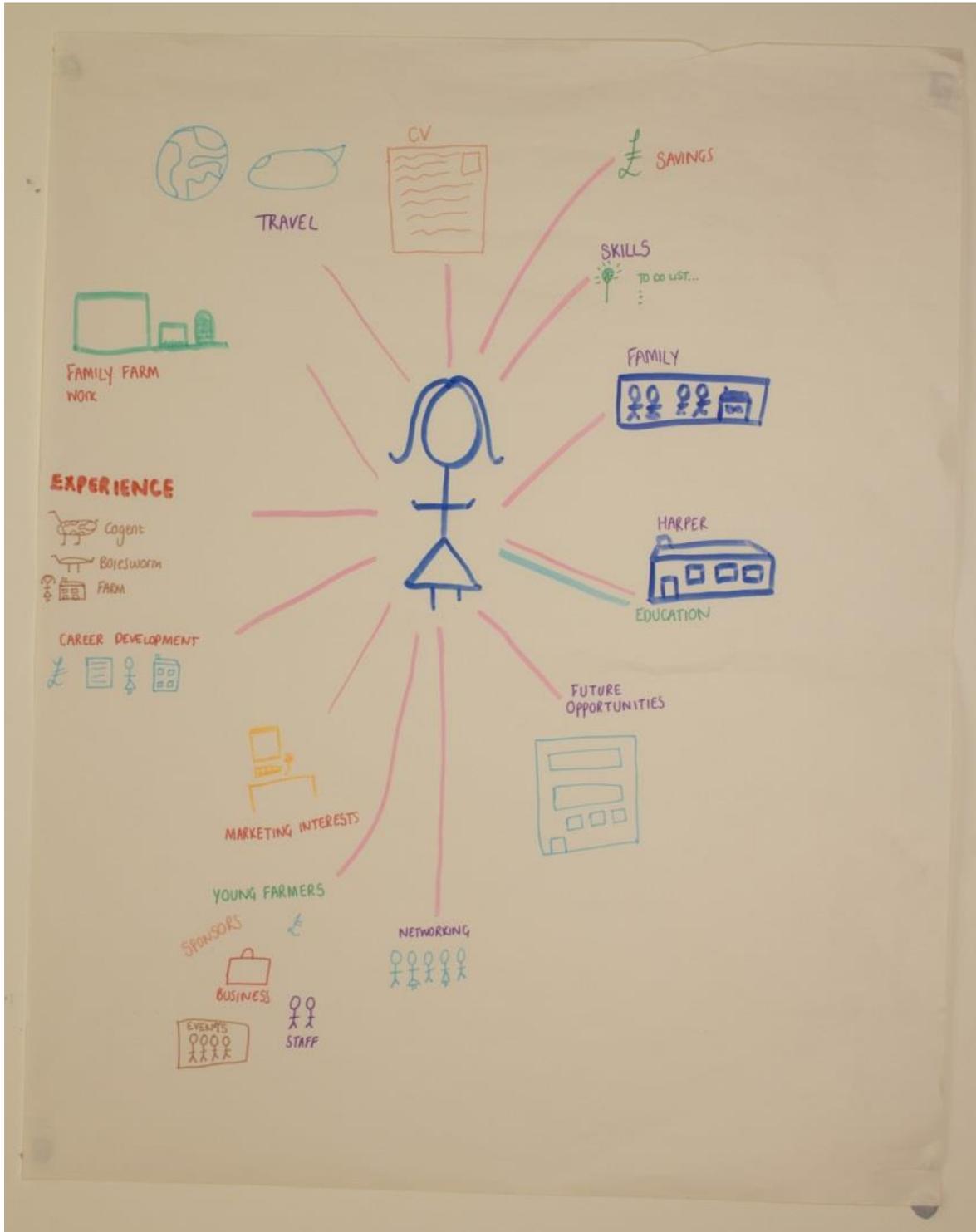
APPENDIX A: Further examples of rich picture drawings undertaken by students to depict brand-me (students S1 and S4), and in preparing for placement (students S1 and S2).
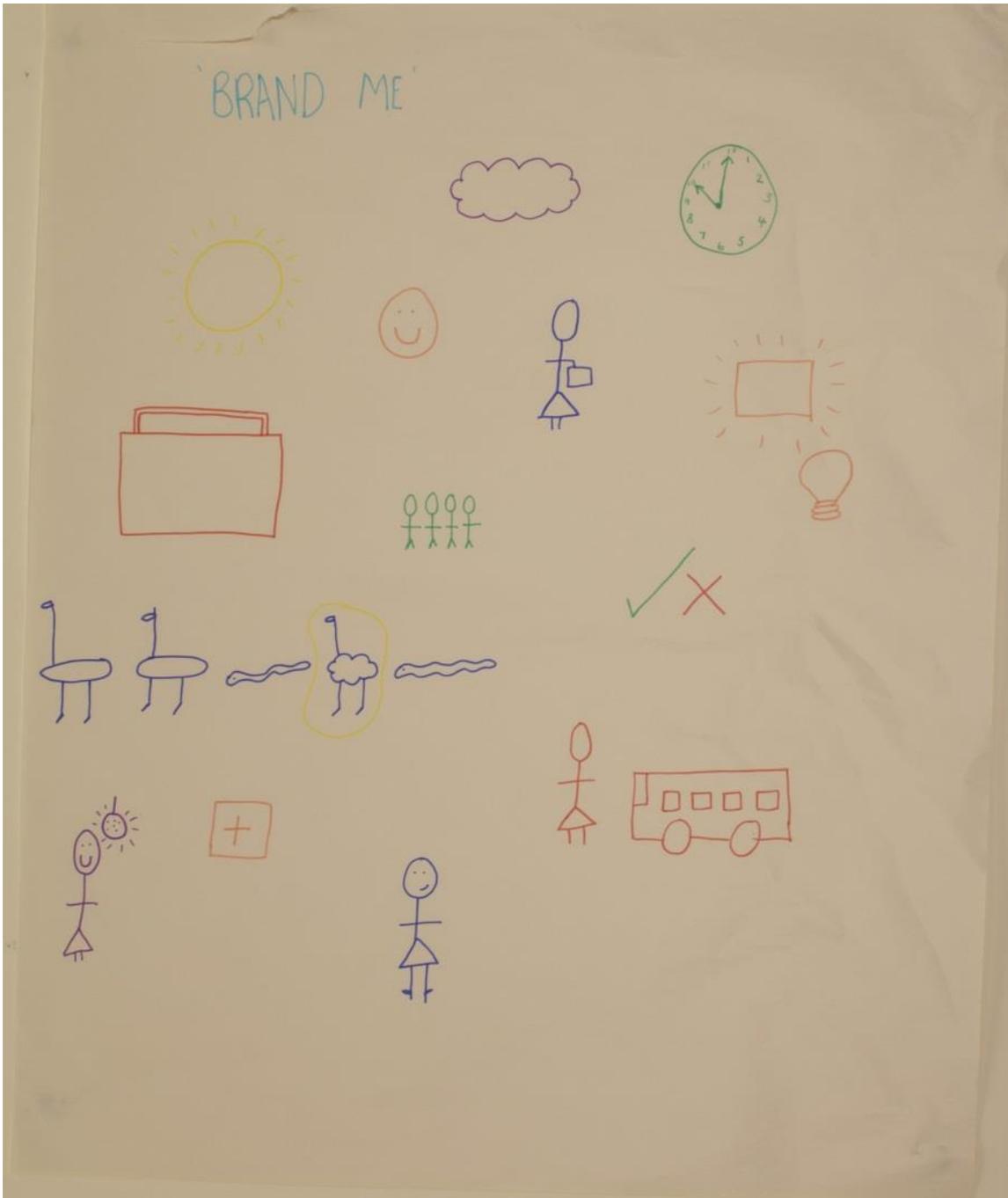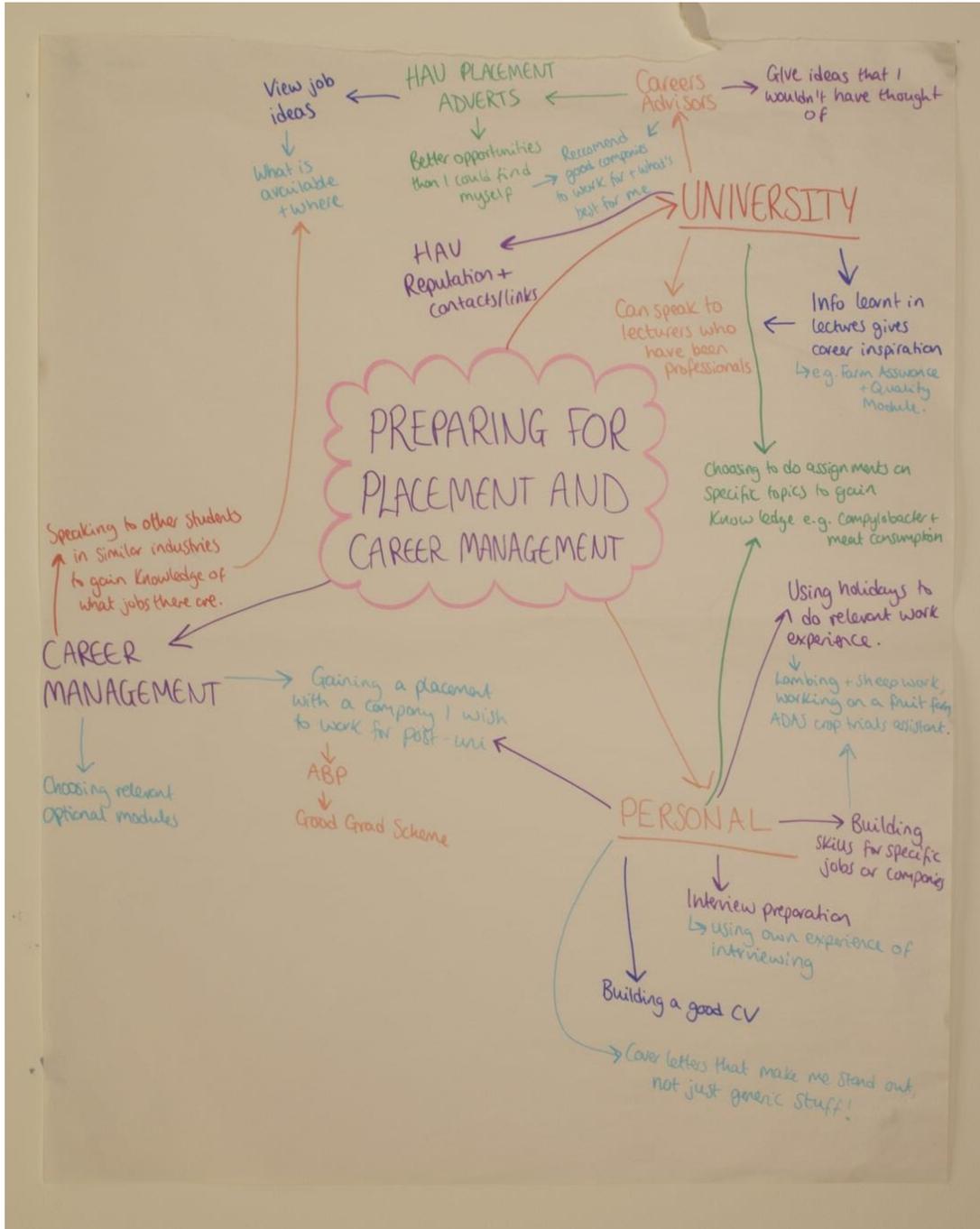

Rich picture drawn by Student S1 to depict Brand-Me

Rich picture drawn by student S4 to depict Brand-Me

Rich picture drawn by student S1 to depict their preparations for industrial placement

Rich picture drawn by student S2 to depict their preparations for industrial placement (mostly text)

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Papers stem from presentations[1] delivered at the 3rd International Research Symposium on Cooperative and Work-Integrated Education

[1] Papers included in this IJWIL Special Issue are based on selected presentations and manuscripts from the research symposium's refereed proceedings. All manuscripts were expanded and modified to meet IJWIL requirements followed by double-blind reviewed by the IJWIL editorial board, and then amended before being accepted to be published in IJWIL.

About the Journal

The International Journal of Work-Integrated Learning (IJWIL) publishes double-blind peer-reviewed original research and topical issues dealing with Work-Integrated Learning (WIL). IJWIL first published in 2000 under the name of Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education (APJCE). Since then the readership and authorship has become more international and terminology usage in the literature has favored the broader term of WIL. In response to these changes, the journal name was changed to the International Journal of Work-Integrated Learning in 2018.

In this Journal, WIL is defined as "*an educational approach that uses relevant work-based experiences to allow students to integrate theory with the meaningful practice of work as an intentional component of the curriculum*". Examples of such practice includes work placements, work-terms, internships, practicum, cooperative education (Co-op), fieldwork, work-related projects/competitions, service learning, entrepreneurships, student-led enterprise, applied projects, simulations (including virtual WIL), etc. WIL shares similar aims and underpinning theories of learning as the fields of experiential learning, work-based learning, and vocational education and training, however, each of these fields are seen as separate fields.

The Journal's main aim is to enable specialists working in WIL to disseminate research findings and share knowledge to the benefit of institutions, students, co-op/WIL practitioners, and researchers. The Journal desires to encourage quality research and explorative critical discussion that leads to the advancement of effective practices, development of further understanding of WIL, and promote further research.

Types of Manuscripts Sought by the Journal

Types of manuscripts sought by IJWIL is primarily of two forms; 1) *research publications* describing research into aspects of work-integrated learning and, 2) *topical discussion* articles that review relevant literature and provide critical explorative discussion around a topical issue. The journal will, on occasions, consider best practice submissions.

Research publications should contain; an introduction that describes relevant literature and sets the context of the inquiry. A detailed description and justification for the methodology employed. A description of the research findings - tabulated as appropriate, a discussion of the importance of the findings including their significance to current established literature, implications for practitioners and researchers, whilst remaining mindful of the limitations of the data. And a conclusion preferably including suggestions for further research.

Topical discussion articles should contain a clear statement of the topic or issue under discussion, reference to relevant literature, critical and scholarly discussion on the importance of the issues, critical insights to how to advance the issue further, and implications for other researchers and practitioners.

Best practice and program description papers. On occasions, the Journal also seeks manuscripts describing a practice of WIL as an example of best practice, however, only if it presents a particularly unique or innovative practice or is situated in an unusual context. There must be a clear contribution of new knowledge to the established literature. Manuscripts describing what is essentially 'typical', 'common' or 'known' practices will be encouraged to rewrite the focus of the manuscript to a significant educational issue or will be encouraged to publish their work via another avenue that seeks such content.

By negotiation with the Editor-in-Chief, the Journal also accepts a small number of *Book Reviews* of relevant and recently published books.